Department that it was being run in a narrow spirit of unimaginative officialism and that its limbs were bound in a tangle of red tape which kept it from getting ahead with its job.

Too much red tape

Constant attempts were made by me and by others to infuse a new spirit into the Department by the introduction of men of a more suitable type into the work, especially on the publicity side. Mr. Chamberlain regarded these suggestions as involving an aspersion on the men he had chosen for the purpose—all able men for other tasks. He stubbornly resisted every proposal made to him for improving and strengthening the Department in certain directions where it was patently deficient.

The machinery which Mr. Chamberlain created showed itself incompetent to deal even with volunteer recruits, and certainly too unreliable to be entrusted with the administration of dictatorial powers. Possibly the task would have been beyond any man's ability. It called for a great breadth and boldness of conception, a remorseless energy and thoroughness of execution, and for the exercise of supreme tact in dealing with other Departments, notably the recruiting machinery and the Ministries of Labour, Munitions, Agriculture and Trade, in order to avert friction, jealousies and the stranglehold of red tape. We needed, in short, a man of

A giant task

exceptional gifts. A man may possess very considerable ability without qualifying for that definition. Mr. Neville Chamberlain is a man of rigid competency. Such men have their uses in conventional times or in conventional positions, and are indispensable for filling subordinate posts at all times. But they are lost in an emergency or in creative tasks at any time.